

From: [Chris Lish](#)
To: Delta.Plan.Comments@Deltacouncil
Subject: Delta Plan Scoping Comments
Date: Wednesday, January 26, 2011 12:07:46 PM

Dear Chair of the Delta Stewardship Council,

This is an important moment for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta ecosystem and the Delta Stewardship Council. The Bay-Delta's ecosystem is in a state of ongoing collapse and there are concerns regarding the long-term physical stability of the Delta. Drafting a visionary and effective Delta Plan will require the careful consideration of a wide range of alternative actions, including significant new directions in water management.

"Every man who appreciates the majesty and beauty of the wilderness and of wild life, should strike hands with the farsighted men who wish to preserve our material resources, in the effort to keep our forests and our game beasts, game-birds, and game-fish—indeed, all the living creatures of prairie and woodland and seashore—from wanton destruction. Above all, we should realize that the effort toward this end is essentially a democratic movement."

-- Theodore Roosevelt

Recent surveys in the San Francisco Bay-Delta reveal that native open-water fish species remain at alarmingly low levels, meaning California's largest estuary is still in ecological collapse. The California Department of Fish and Game's latest survey indicates that Sacramento splittail have reached record-low population levels, Delta smelt continue toward extinction, and longfin smelt continue to be endangered. Major factors in the declines are massive water diversions, toxic chemicals and pesticides, and invasive species. Powerful agricultural interests and the state of California have derailed federal measures to protect Central Valley chinook salmon and Delta smelt, instead promoting the diversion of even *more* water from the ravaged Delta ecosystem.

"It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment."

-- Ansel Adams

The Council should clearly recognize that the Bay-Delta estuary is over-appropriated and that ecosystem restoration will require stronger flow standards and reductions in average annual diversions. I recommend that the Council use the following broad recommendations to guide the development of the draft Delta Plan and a draft EIR that analyzes a broad set of alternatives.

1. Guarantee Fresh Water to Support & Restore the Delta Ecosystem: The Bay-Delta ecosystem is a national and statewide resource critical to California's economic health, to the plants, animals, birds and fish that live here, and to the health of our communities.
2. Enforce Existing Water Pollution Control Laws: Commit to full implementation and enforcement of state and federal laws to protect both surface water and groundwater quality. The state is failing to meet existing standards to protect Bay-Delta surface water and groundwater quality, and is lagging in the development of new standards and pollutant loads needed to ensure the health of the estuary's waters. Contaminants such as salt, selenium, mercury, nutrients and pesticides pollute drinking water and damage the health of the Delta, and the damage is mounting.
3. Reducing Reliance on the Delta: Recognize that California has dramatic opportunities to invest in regional water supplies (e.g. agricultural and urban conservation, waste water recycling, groundwater management and urban storm water capture) that can allow the state to meet its future needs, while simultaneously facilitating the restoration of the Delta ecosystem.
4. More Water Exports Should Not be Promised before Safe Limits are Established: Existing export of fresh water flows from the Bay-Delta estuary should be contingent on ensuring sufficient water to support and restore the Bay-Delta ecosystem in perpetuity; and
5. Reduce Risks to people and property by determining a safe yield for water exports: A "water grab" that allows more water exports from the Bay-Delta estuary, ignoring the restraints of nature, expanding exports by promising unrealistic inflated quantities of water does not promote reliability, it promotes conflict. Providing water to areas south of the Delta must protect the habitat, local economies of the Sierra, Northern California, Delta and the San Joaquin River regions.

6. Enforce water rights: Don't allow politically-connected and powerful interests to sell publicly owned water supplies at a profit while damaging surrounding communities and their water supplies.

7. Protect Taxpayers: Taxpayers and ratepayers must not be soaked again—either through bonds or direct payments for the costs of exporting this water. Any plan adopted to export water out of the Delta from the Northern California and Sierra watersheds must be cost effective and ensure those exporting water from the Bay-Delta estuary can pay the mitigation costs, design, and capital costs.

"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

-- Aldo Leopold

Thank you for considering the above comments. I look forward to following the work of the Council as it develops the Delta Plan. Please do NOT add my name to your mailing list. I will learn about future developments on this issue from other sources.

Sincerely,

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